

CITY OF BELMONT

PLANNING COMMISSION

SUMMARY MINUTES

TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2009, 7:00 PM

Chair Parsons called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. at One Twin Pines Lane, City Hall Council Chambers.

1. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Parsons, Horton, Mercer, McKenzie, Mayer, Reed, Frautschi
Commissioners Absent: None

Staff Present: Community Development Director de Melo (CDD), Senior Planner DiDonato (SP), Assistant Planner Walker (AP), Associate Planner Gill (AP), City Attorney Zafferano (CA), Recording Secretary Flores (RS)

2. AGENDA AMENDMENTS - None

3. COMMUNITY FORUM (Public Comments) - None

4. CONSENT CALENDAR

4A. Minutes of February 3, 2009

RS Flores noted that changes had been received from Commissioners Mercer and Reed on Page 6, paragraph 2, Page 8, paragraph 4, and Page 10, paragraph 3. Commissioner Frautschi added a correction to the last sentence of the first paragraph of Page 8.

MOTION: By Commissioner Mercer, seconded by Commissioner Frautschi, to accept the Minutes of February 3, 2009 as corrected.

Ayes: Mercer, Frautschi, Mayer, McKenzie, Reed, Horton, Parsons
Noes: None

Motion passed 7/0

5. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

5A. PUBLIC HEARING – 2500 Coronet Boulevard

To consider Single Family Design Review approval to construct a 1,083 square foot addition to the existing 1,639 square foot single family residence for a total of 2,722 square feet that is below the zoning district permitted 3,500 square feet for the site. (Appl. No. 2008-0065)

APN: 044-260-130; ZONING: R-1B (Single Family Residential)

CEQA Status: Categorical Exemption per Section 15303

APPLICANT/OWNER: Joseph Cadenasso

PROJECT PLANNER: Rob Gill, (650) 598-4204

AP Gill summarized the Staff Report, recommending approval of the proposed resolution with the conditions attached. Responding to Commissioner Frautschi's request for an irrigation plan, AP Gill stated that it could be added to the conditions of approval. Commissioners' questions regarding height of the trash enclosure and a lower-level deck were deferred to the project architect.

Craig DeLong, architect for the project, explained that the deck on the back of the house will be piers and cladding down to the ground level and that there is a little clearance for storage but no subfloor. The trash enclosure will be 6' high. He added that as part of the landscape design, it was the owner's request that all of the plants be native, drought-tolerant plants.

Chair Parsons opened the Public Hearing. No one came forward to speak.

MOTION: By Commissioner Frautschi, seconded by Commissioner Mayer, to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 7/0 by a show of hands.

Commissioners Reed, Mayer, Horton and McKenzie liked the addition, found no issues and could make all the findings. Commissioner Mercer concurred, adding that she was impressed that they maintained a low profile and with the way they continued the facing to the back of the house. Her only criticism was that the siding on the left front of the house did not seem to conform to the back. Commissioner Frautschi liked the remodel and the landscape plan, and the scheme used to combine the metal, cedar siding and plaster. He concurred with Commissioner Mercer about the front left side of the house and suggested that an awning might add to the appearance. Even though it is a drought-tolerant landscape plan, Commissioner Frautschi felt that staff will need to see some sort of an irrigation scheme. Chair Parsons complimented the owner and architect on a good project.

MOTION: By Commissioner McKenzie, seconded by Commissioner Reed, to adopt the resolution approving a Single-Family Design Review at 2500 Coronet Boulevard (App. No. 2008-0065) with the condition that an irrigation plan be submitted to staff with the permitting.

Ayes: McKenzie, Reed, Mayer, Frautschi, Mercer, Horton, Parson
Noes: None
Motion passed 7/0.

Chair Parsons announced that this project can be appealed to the City Council within 10 calendar days.

5B. PUBLIC HEARING – 700 Island Parkway and Remnant Parcel

To consider a Rezoning of a remnant piece of the property to a Planned Development District (PD) via amendment of a Conceptual Development Plan (CDP). The property to be rezoned is currently used as parking lot for sales/serviced vehicles for the Autobahn Motors Sales/Service facility (Appl. No. 2008-0041) APN: 040-360-480 and 040-360-530 and Remnant Parcel; ZONING: PD (Planned Development)

CEQA Status: Negative Declaration

APPLICANT: Sonic Development

OWNER(s): Lucas Trust Properties, LLC and City of Belmont

PROJECT PLANNER: Damon DiDonato, (650) 637-2908

SP DiDonato summarized the Staff Report, recommending that the proposed Resolutions be forwarded to the City Council for approval of the Mitigated Negative Declaration, the Conceptual Development Plan and Rezoning of the subject site to Planned Development.

Staff responded to Commissioners' questions as follows:

- Lots 14 and 15 are owned by Lucas Trust and the City of Belmont owns the abandoned piece of public right-of-way, which is leased to the dealership and used as a parking lot.
- The abandoned remnant of property will continue to generate revenue for the City even though it will be incorporated under the Planned Development. The ruling at this meeting will simply rezone the remnant piece of property.
- If Lucas Trust purchases the remnant piece of property at some future date, they would conduct a Lot Line Adjustment to add it to Lot 15.
- If the dealership at some point no longer needs the leased property, the uses that exist at this time are the uses envisioned for the future, but if there would be substantive changes the CDP would be back before the Planning Commission and Council.
- This clean-up action was initiated by the applicant.
- If the Lucas Dealership or a portion of it is sold, the lease would still be in place because it would still be a parking lot, but if some use other than a parking lot was proposed there would be a CUP review. The ownership is not the key; it's the lease and the zoning.

- If the City ever decided to sell this remnant parcel it would not come before the Planning Commission for review.

Chair Parsons opened the Public Hearing. No one came forward to speak.

MOTION: By Commissioner Frautschi, seconded by Commissioner Mayer, to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 7/0 by a show of hands.

All Commissioners viewed this as a straight-forward clean-up action. Commissioner Mercer added her concern that this action could open the door for the City to sell the piece of property and that she was not keen on that possibility.

MOTION: By Commissioner Reed, seconded by Commissioner Frautschi, to adopt the Resolution recommending City Council adoption of a Negative Declaration of Environmental Significance for the Rezoning of a Remnant Piece of the Property to a Planned Development District (PD) via amendment of a Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) at 700 Island Parkway (APN 40-360-480 and 040-360-530) (Appl. No. 2008-0041).

Ayes: Reed, Frautschi, Mercer, Mayer, McKenzie, Horton, Parsons
Noes: None

Motion passed 7/0

Motion: By Commissioner Reed, seconded by Vice Chair Horton, to adopt the Resolution recommending City Council approval of a Rezoning of a Remnant Piece of the Property to a Planned Development District (PD) via amendment of a Conceptual Development Plan at 700 Island Parkway (Appl. No. 08-0041), with attached Exhibit A, Performance Standards.

Ayes: Reed, Horton, McKenzie, Mayer, Frautschi, Mercer, Parsons
Noes: None
Motion passed 7/0

Chair Parsons announced that this item could be appealed within 10 calendar days.

5C. PUBLIC HEARING – 2819 San Juan Boulevard

To consider a Single Family Design Review to construct a new 3,447 square-foot single-family residence on an existing vacant lot that is below the zoning district permitted 3,500 square feet for the site. (Appl. No. 2008-0043)

APN: 043-322-330; ZONING: R-1B (Single Family Residential)

CEQA Status: Categorical Exemption per Section 15303

APPLICANT: Hashim Al-Yassin, Architect

OWNER: David Dalo

PROJECT PLANNER: Jennifer Walker, (650) 595-7453

AP Walker summarized the Staff Report, recommending approval subject to the conditions of approval attached. She answered questions from the Commission regarding trees, fill, outdoor decorations, and paving, and felt there would be merit to the Commission evaluating some of the proposed decorative trees. It was determined that Public Works did not include a condition requiring creation of a sidewalk plan and noted that the whole section is red-curbed.

David Dalo, owner of the subject property, stated that the plastic-wrapped structure on the property is scaffolding that will be used when they construct the house, and confirmed that the original house was on the upper corner of the lot. He added that the decision to shift the house forward on the lot was at the recommendation of the Planning Department.

Chair Parsons opened the Public Hearing.

Robert Leong, neighbor, expressed his concerns about debris being piled against his fence, shadowing of his house, water run-off, and construction noise at unauthorized hours.

MOTION: By Commissioner Frautschi, seconded by Commissioner Mercer, to close the Public Hearing. Motion passed 7/0 by a show of hands.

Responding to Mr. Leong, Chair Parsons stated that the drainage issue will be dealt with in the building permit approval process and that the Commission cannot rule on the issue of shadowing as there are no ordinances or codes in place that allows them to do that. Regarding the privacy issue, he noted that the only second-story window on Mr. Leon's side of the house is for a bathroom, which will probably be opaque, and suggested that the first floor windows and fence be discussed with the owner as he will probably have the same concerns. CDD de Melo interjected that construction is allowed between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays and no construction on Sundays or holidays. If Mr. Leon experiences any issues related to construction noise, he has every right to call the City's Code Enforcement Division or the Police Department.

Commissioner Horton felt that there was too much hardscape and that the dirt could be moved around effectively to avoid having to import 250 cu.yds. She noted that the plantings need to be reviewed with the deer population in mind. She would like to be able to read the civil drawings.

Commissioner Mayer questioned the fill issue but felt that the design fits in.

Hashim Al-Yassin, project architect, explained that the imported fill is for use under the front stairs, but that he could support the stairs without any fill. He had estimated only 50 cu.yds. of fill and would need to discuss this and the amount of hardscape with the landscape architect, who was not present. He would agree to whatever the Commission recommended regarding concrete vs. pavers.

Commissioner Reed noted that the arborist report highlighted 3 of the trees as being heavy water users. In view of the Governor's recent call for a 20% cut in water use, he would have a tough time making the Landscape Plan finding unless more drought-tolerant species were introduced.

Commission Frautschi commented as follows:

- The "eyebrow" over the front porch does not relate very well to the roof line.
- The Landscape Plan needs a few additional large habitat trees in the front.
- The Oak tree on the left side of the property is stressed; the ivy on it needs to be removed as soon as possible. He suggested that that might be an area where an Oak tree could be added to augment the grove setting.
- The Oak species chosen is non-native and might not survive. He suggested use of a California Oak.
- He could not determine what percentage of the lot is paved and would need a calculation. It appeared to him that there is a lot of pavement that does not need to be there.
- There is excessive fill that would not be needed if the front sidewalk were designed differently. There is no reason on such a huge site that they couldn't shift dirt around to make it work.
- Decks end up becoming a maintenance nightmare, especially referring to the deck proposed off the family room. He felt that the deck off of the bedroom would not be used and that it would be better to bump the bedroom out.
- He would want the Landscape Plan to come back to the Commission with improved plant materials. He would vote to continue the item to make it a better project and to help the applicant.

Commissioner Mercer made the following comments:

- Conceptually, the house will blend in with the area but she felt there was confusion design-wise because they are striving for contemporary but have a colonial bay window and a portico that detract from the contemporary goal.
- She could not make Finding B with respect to grading and fill, and wanted to see revised calculations. She suggested that perhaps the house could be lowered a foot or slide back a bit to reduce the fill. Rerouting the sidewalk as suggested by Commissioner Frautschi might also be a way to eliminate some of the fill.
- She agreed about the hardscape; a simple replacement of concrete with steps and crushed granite on the left-hand walkway and cobblestone in the back would make it more permeable.
- She fully supported staff's calculation of the \$7500 fee for the tree removals that have already taken place. This fee is due to the City at this point whether or not there is a building permit issued.

- She fully endorsed the additional tree bond for the risk to the neighbor's heritage species tree.
- She would vote for continuation with some consideration given to reducing the fill and hardscape.

Commissioner McKenzie echoed the above sentiments. He liked the design of the home and the way it is designed further upfront on the property and into the upslope and agreed that there are too many missing elements – the cut and fill, the hardscape calculations and problems reading drawings. He would support a continuance to take care of those details.

Commissioner Mercer added, for staff, that she would like Public Works to take another look at the sidewalk situation and resolve whether it is or is not required and what the curb treatment will be.

Vice Chair Horton added that she would like to see the stair design, because it appears on the model that there is some kind of railing or wall around the stair that they need to look at.

Chair Parsons' concern was the readability of the drawings and the issues of the amount of fill and hardscape. He stated that he did not understand what appears to be a wall coming across the driveway and felt that the design of the stairway needs to be reconsidered. He suggested that replacing some of the hard surfaces with pavers and crushed gravel, different types of stairs, and perhaps rock retaining walls as opposed to concrete walls would provide a better looking and more environmentally friendly house. He added that the privacy issue should also be discussed with staff and the neighbors.

MOTION: By Commissioner Frautschi, seconded by Commissioner McKenzie, to continue the application for the redesign elements that have been spoken to for 2819 San Juan Blvd. to a date uncertain (Appl. No. 2008-0043).

Ayes: Frautschi, McKenzie, Mercer, Mayer, Reed, Horton, Parsons
 Noes: None
 Motion passed 7/0

6. REPORTS, STUDIES AND UPDATES:

6A. Motel 6 – 1101 Shoreway Road
 No update at this time.

6B. NDNU (Koret) Athletic Field
 Chair Parsons felt that this issue has been dragging on too long and he did not see any progress coming out of the meetings. He plans to put the CUP on an agenda and if the parties cannot work it out between themselves, then the Commission will work it out with the school. He would like to write a letter to all parties concerned and get the matter resolved.

6C. Charles Armstrong School – 1405 Solana Drive
 CDD de Melo noted that the next action item is to have a follow-up to the recent meeting at the end of April or beginning of May. He has notes from that meeting if Commissioners would like to see them.

6D. Ralston/US-101 Landscape Project
 No update at this time.

6E. San Mateo Development – North Road/43rd Avenue
 CDD de Melo stated that there are still some questions relative to past approvals for the two existing buildings as well as the driveway access that has previously been constructed for the project. A follow-up meeting was scheduled for the following day. Chair Parsons added that he has had conversations with neighbors, who are very supportive of what the Commission is trying to do and feel that the City needs to do something about that whole side of the street.

6F. 900 Sixth Avenue – Belmont Vista Facility
 CDD de Melo reported that the two trees have been planted and that the signage at the front of the property is within the property lines. Chair Parsons added that the sign at the top of Hill Street could not possibly be on their property.

6G. Caltrain Landscape Area

CDD de Melo has observed some pruning on both sides of Ralston Avenue. Rain in last few weeks has provided natural irrigation but it is still an issue that is on the City Manager's radar in terms of wanting to go to a Joint Powers Authority for a more comprehensive solution.

6H. Vanea Auto – 900 El Camino Real

No update at this time.

6I. Parking Study – Downtown Village Areas

No update at this time.

6J. High-Speed Train (HST) Project – San Francisco to San Jose

This item was added to the agenda at the request of Chair Parsons. His concern is the impact this project could have on Belmont, and asked if the City had received a description of the project or anything that the Commission could address. He asked if a speaker could come to the next Planning Commission meeting to describe the project plans. CA Zafferano stated that he believed the City Manager is coordinating with a subcommittee of the City Council or a councilmember with respect to attending some of the scoping meetings or getting additional information. He anticipated that there will be a presentation before the City Council. Chair Parsons asked staff to work with the City Manager and Public Works so that the Planning Commission can be briefed on whatever information is available.

Other Items

Commissioner Mercer requested follow up on these items:

- Formation of the Tree Board that was authorized last fall. It was her understanding that the intent was for a newly formed Tree Board to work on the Tree Ordinance amendments. CDD de Melo stated that it is tasked to be completed soon.
- A time frame as to when the Sign Ordinance might get under way.
- She would like to hear how the Design Guidelines prepared by SP DiDonato over a year ago are working and if there is anything the Commission might want to finalize or add to them.

Commissioner McKenzie had noticed two new very large, illuminated signs at the Dairy Bell and wondered if they had been approved. CDD de Melo responded that they had not, and the Code Enforcement and Planning Departments are attempting to obtain applications for the signs.

Commissioner Reed asked if there is anything that can be done to improve erosion control at the house on South Road that is in mid-construction.

Commissioner Reed noted that 1300 El Camino is a bit of an eye sore and suggested that it be beautified with perhaps an opaque fence and graffiti removal. CDD de Melo responded that since construction is not imminent due to the economic downturn he could approach the property owner and ask him to clean it up so that it is a little less intrusive.

Commissioner Mayer asked for guidelines for entering property being reviewed by the Commission. CDD de Melo responded that when staff sends out Public Hearing notices to property owners they will include a cover letter advising that staff or other city officials may be visiting the site. CA Zafferano recommended that staff or Commissioners go to the front door and knock or ring the doorbell and identify themselves before entering other areas of the property.

Chair Parsons asked staff to check to determine if there are permits for a house that is being built on the Alameda across from Safeway where there is currently a garage standing alone.

CDD de Melo thanked the Commissioners for attending the Commission Appreciation dinner, and acknowledged how hard their job is, how many hours they put in and how much better the City is as a result of their efforts.

Commissioner McKenzie asked if there is a schedule for landscaping at the Emmett House donor site, which to him looks like a blighted area. CDD de Melo responded that any landscaping there will be temporary but that it is an item on the Parks and Recreation Commission's priority calendar. Chair Parsons added that it would help from a marketing standpoint if it didn't look like a construction site.

7. CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2009

Liaison: Commissioner Frautschi

Alternate Liaison: Vice Chair Horton

8. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. to a Regular Planning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, March 17, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in Belmont City Hall.

Carlos de Melo

Planning Commission Secretary

CD's of Planning Commission Meetings are available in the
Community Development Department.

Please call (650) 595-7416 to schedule an appointment